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ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of the adult education in Florida, demonstrating the societal as well as individual benefits of adult education. The document highlights findings of two reports:"Results of Florida's Fourth Year Adult Education Program Evaluation" and "Adult Education Annual Performance Report." Findings include the following: (1) according to the 1990 Census, approximately 26 percent of adults in Florida over the age of 18 lack a high school diploma; (2) adult education is needed because of individual achievement, economic development, population growth, and social change; (3) target groups include educationally disadvantaged persons, adults with limited English proficiency, homeless adults, persons with disabilities, minority adults, immigrant adults, at-risk youth, institutionalized adults, and incarcerated adults; (4) literacy education service providers include colleges, school districts, correctional institutions, community-based organizations, employers, and libraries; (5) Florida leads the nation in enrollment of students in adult basic education classes; (6) the most important reason given by adult students for being in adult education was to earn a high school diploma or General Educational Development certificate; (7) teachers and administrators give adult education great support; and (8) improvements are needed in support services of students. (KC)

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ED 414 419

Challenges and Accomplishments

Report on Florida's Adult Education Programs

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A Report for Fiscal Year 1995

Fall 1996

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Challenges and Accomplishments: Report on Florida's Adult Education Programs

A Report for Fiscal Year 1995

Fall 1996

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Introduction

Introduction

Challenges and Accomplishments is produced annually by the Division of Applied Technology and Adult Education and serves as an overview of the Adult Education program in Florida. One of the largest programs in the United States, the details of this report demonstrate the societal as well as individual benefits of adult education.

This document is based primarily on the results of two reports: ***Results of Florida's Fourth Year Adult Education Program Evaluation*** and the ***Adult Education Annual Performance Report***. The purpose of this report is to succinctly state the educational needs of Florida's adults, to highlight findings of reports, to celebrate successes, and to spur continued development.

Purpose

The primary goal of Florida's Adult Education program as reported in ***Florida's Program Plan for Adult Education*** is to reduce illiteracy and under-education among adults in Florida. In order to meet this need, the state of Florida encourages the establishment of Adult Education programs that:

- enable adults to acquire the basic educational skills for literate functioning;
- provide adults with sufficient basic education to enable them to benefit from job training and retraining programs and obtain and retain employment so that they may more fully enjoy the benefits and responsibilities of citizenship;
- enable adults who so desire to continue their education to at least the level of completion of secondary school; and
- enable adults to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

According to the 1990 Census, approximately 26 percent of adults in Florida over the age of 18 lack a high school diploma.

Needs

Even the most basic service and trade jobs now often require knowledge, skills, and the ability to retrain, resulting in a productive economy.

Florida's adult education needs are great. According to the 1990 census, approximately 26 percent of adults in Florida over the age of 18 lack a high school diploma. Additionally, the ***State Adult Literacy Survey of Florida***, completed during this fiscal year, shows that 21-23 percent of the adults in Florida demonstrated skills in the lowest levels of prose, document, and quantitative literacy.

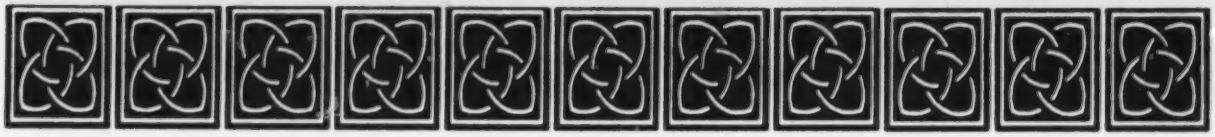
Florida's adult education program needs result from a wide variety of reasons. These include:

✓ ***Current Attainment***
As noted previously, within our state there is currently a great need for adult education. For the estimated 26 percent of adults without a high school diploma, services are imperative. In addition, Florida's adult education programs often serve young adults who have recently dropped out of school.

✓ ***Economic Development***
For those with limited literacy skills, obtaining and retaining a job is difficult. As this report will discuss in greater detail later, the majority of adults currently enrolled in adult education are without a job. The economic development of Florida relies on trained workers. Even the most basic service and trade jobs now require knowledge, skills, and the ability to retrain resulting in a productive economy.

✓ ***Population Growth***
It is estimated that Florida will grow between 1991 and 2010 at a rate of change that will drive it from the fourth most populated state to the second most populated state. Additionally, it is believed that a great deal of the growth will be due to an influx of immigration from a variety of countries, representing a diversity of languages and literacy skills. English language training is vital to their assimilation.

✓ ***Social Change***
As the ***State Adult Literacy Survey*** vividly details, the relationship between low levels of literacy and unemployment, poverty, crime and teen pregnancy are clearly related. Both workforce education classes (adult education in the workplace) which teach literacy in the context of work and family literacy programs, which emphasize parenting skills, demonstrate the effect literacy can have on one's life. Additionally, higher rates of literacy also impact our civil rights—persons with higher rates of literacy are more apt to fulfill their civic responsibilities



and to take advantage of their rights.

Target Groups

Florida's target populations in accordance with the ***State Program Plan for Adult Education*** are:

- Educationally disadvantaged adults (less than 5th grade)
- Under-educated Adults (non-high school graduates)
- Limited English proficient adults
- Homeless adults
- Workplace adults
- Individuals with disabilities
- Minority adults
- Immigrant adults including adult migrant farmworkers
- At-risk youth (16 years or older)
- Adults living in public housing
- Institutionalized adults
- Incarcerated adults

Service Providers

Services to adults with literacy needs are provided by a diverse delivery system. These include: school districts, community colleges, the Department of Corrections, community-based organizations, employers, housing authorities, libraries and universities.

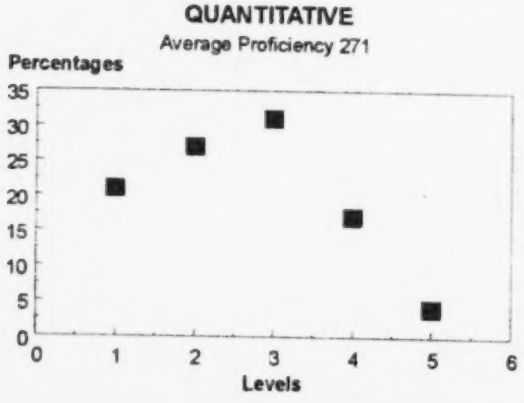
Adult Education

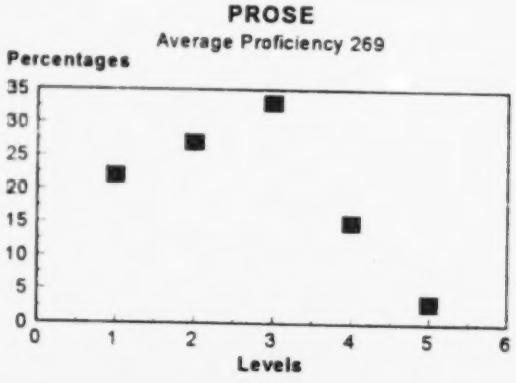
Challenge

The ***State Adult Literacy Survey of Florida***, reports that 21-23 percent of the adults in Florida demonstrated skills in the lowest literacy level of prose, document, and quantitative literacy. Many of the adults in this level display relatively limited skills. Yet, the report indicates that the vast majority of these persons described themselves as reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English either well or very well. In other words, our potential students are not aware of their limited skills or of the relationship between their skill level and possible corresponding factors (such as a reliance on welfare, unemployment or poverty). Therefore, recruitment into adult education and demonstrated gain in our classes is of great importance.

The average proficiency in Florida in prose was 269, in document, 264, and in quantitative, 271. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey Conversions table developed for JOBS and JTPA reporting purposes, the average proficiency of 264-271 would be between eighth and ninth grade level. Thus, those participants in both levels 1 and 2 could benefit from adult education services.

Level 1	(0-225)
Level 2	(226-275)
Level 3	(276-325)
Level 4	(326-375)
Level 5	(376-500)





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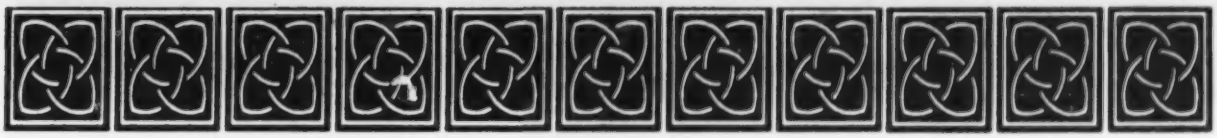
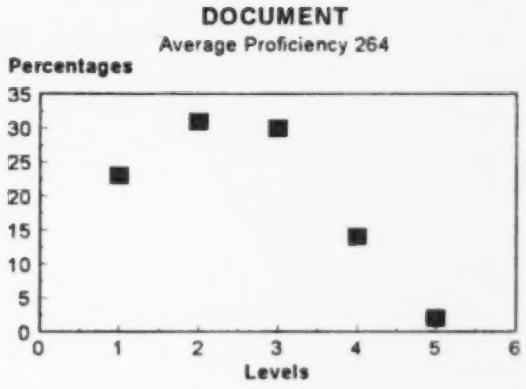
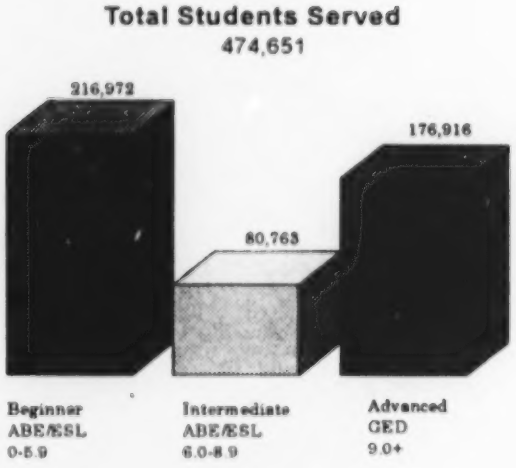




...our potential students are not aware of their limited skills or of the relationship between their skill level and possible corresponding factors (such as reliance on welfare, unemployment, or poverty).

Accomplishment

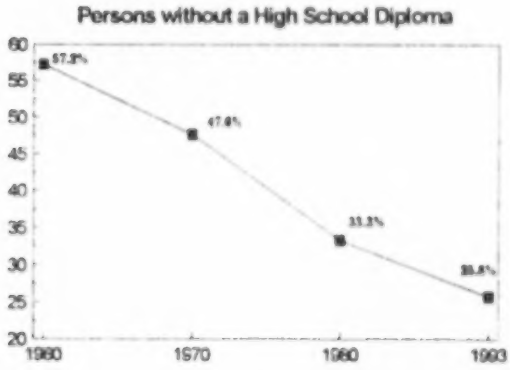
In Fiscal Year 1994-95, Florida's adult education program providers served 474,651 students (an increase of 26,108 from FY 1994). Of these students, 46 percent were in the *beginning* Adult Basic Education (ABE) or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Seventeen percent participated in the *intermediate* Adult Basic Education or English as a Second Language programs and 37 percent participated in the *advanced* instructional programs.



—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

Accomplishment

Florida's Fiscal Year 1994-1995 accomplishments continued the strong commitment in Florida to increase the literacy levels of its citizenry. Since 1960, there has been a steady decrease in the percentage of persons lacking a high school diploma.



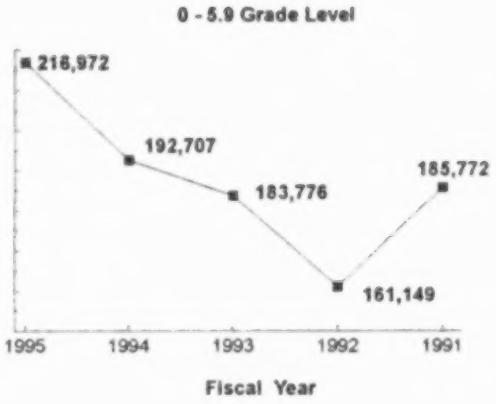
—Trends in Literacy in the State of Florida

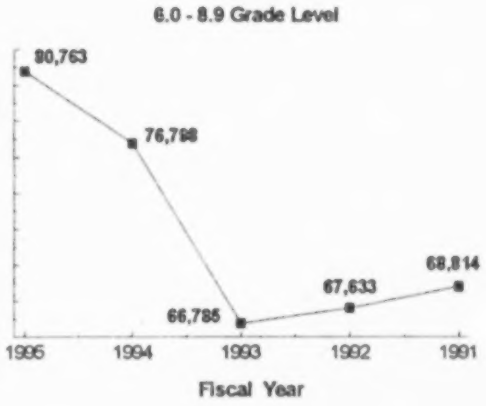
Reaching and Serving Target Populations

Target populations for Florida were developed as part of the Adult Education Act reauthorization. Hearings were held around the state to determine the priorities for services based on national requirements and state needs. The results were that an emphasis should be placed in the following areas.

❒ **Educationally disadvantaged adults (less than 6th grade)**

Educationally disadvantaged adults are at a tremendous risk. As the ***State Adult Literacy Survey*** reports, those in this level frequently display difficulty completing such simple tasks as: adding numbers on a bank deposit slip, entering personal information on an application form, or locating the time or place of an event on a schedule. The United States Department of Education reported that Florida was second in enrollment of students in Adult Basic Education classes in the last fiscal year.





The United States Department of Education reported that Florida was number one in enrollment of students in Adult Basic Education classes in the last fiscal year.

—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

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❒ **Under-educated Adults (non-high school graduates)**

Adult education opportunities resulted in 29 percent of all diplomas awarded in Florida this year.

According to the 1990 census, approximately 26 percent of the adult population ages 18 years and above, lacks a high school diploma. This means, approximately one out of every four adults could benefit from additional educational training in adult education. In Florida there are two primary routes which adults may use to earn their State of Florida High School diploma. This is either by completing their credits through the Adult High School programs or by taking and passing the General Education Development (GED) tests.

The Florida Adult Education program also offers students the opportunity to study at home, with a volunteer tutor, or via the KET/GED Television series. By combining these students who choose not to enroll in the classes, with those who do enroll in either the High School Completion courses or the GED courses, the total number of students who earned their high school diploma via these nontraditional routes was 37,861. In sum, adult education opportunities resulted in 29 percent of all diplomas awarded in Florida this year.

Earned High School Diploma through Adult Education Classes in FY 1995

—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

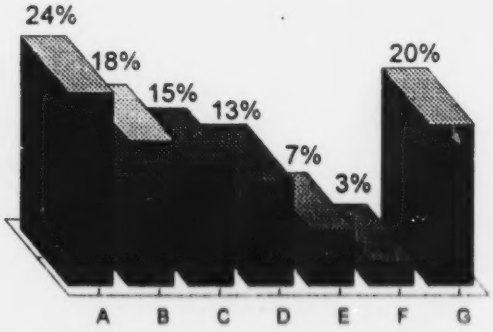
The importance of the GED as a component of the adult education delivery system should not be underestimated. In findings from the ***Results of Florida's Program Evaluation***, the single most important reason that students enroll in the adult education program is to "earn a high school diploma" (36 percent of students). Additionally, the self-defined goals of students in adult education programs support the benefits associated with learning. The most common goals were: "to feel better about myself" (59.3%), "improve my general quality of life" (59.4%), "to get job skills" (58%), "to talk better to others" (37%) and "to be better at math skills" (44%). The United States Department of Education reports that Florida's state-administered Adult Education Program 1994 enrollment in adult secondary education was the second highest in the nation.

Diploma Issued	Number of Diplomas	Percent of Diplomas
Adult High School	2,412	2%
General Education Development	35,449	27%
Standard High School	89,627	69%
Special	2,056	2%

—1995 Numbers Report

In sum, adult education reaches out to potential students who have found that for various reasons the traditional school system did not work. Here are some of the students' reasons:

Reasons Students Stop School



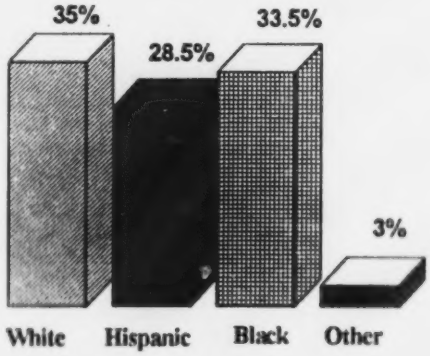
A	Went to work or military
B	Family or personal problems
C	Lost interest or behavioral problems
D	Financial problems
E	Pregnancy
F	Academic problems in school
G	Other

❒ Minority adults

The need for an emphasis on literacy skills for adults in various racial and ethnic groups was highlighted by the findings of the ***National Adult Literacy Survey***. The ***Survey*** found that white adults were less likely than African American or Hispanic adults to demonstrate limited English proficiency. The study found that while only 12-14 percent of white respondents were likely to perform in the lowest literacy level, 48-53 percent of African American adults performed in the lowest level, and 45-48 percent of Latino adults performed in Level 1.

Florida's adult education program provides service to the minority community on a large scale.

Diversity of Adult Education Students



—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

While the most important reason noted by students for being in adult education was to "earn a high school diploma or GED," the second most important reason stated was "to learn English."

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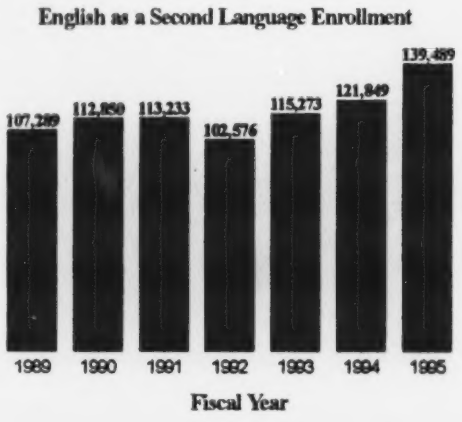
❒ **Limited English Proficient (LEP) adults**

Florida's adult education program is a vital part of the training available to assist adults with limited English proficient skills to better function in our society. In FY 1995, 139,489 students, or roughly 29 percent of those in adult education, were served through our English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

Demonstrating the impact of adult education is the significant scoring difference on the State Adult Literacy Survey. Program completers scored significantly higher than non-completers.



To demonstrate the importance of the English as a Second Language courses, consider the findings of the ***Results of Florida's Program Evaluation***. While the most important reason noted by students for being in adult education was to "earn a high school diploma or GED," the second most important reason stated was "to learn English."

One of the more interesting findings reported in the ***State Adult Literacy Survey***, as related to persons with limited English proficiency, is that 37 percent of the individuals who learned a language other than English before starting school said that they had, at some time, enrolled in a course to learn to read and write English as a Second Language. Demonstrating the impact of the program, the adults who stated that they had completed the program (57 percent of the respondents) scored significantly higher than those who had not.

	Completer Scores	Non-completer Scores
Prose	243	171
Document	245	170
Quantitative	265	184

—State Adult Literacy Survey

❒ **Immigrant adults including adult migrant farmworkers**

According to the ***State Adult Literacy Report***, Florida residents who were born in the United States performed far better on the assessment, on average, than did foreign-born individuals. Across the literacy scales, about half (44-51 percent) of the foreign-born

adults in the state performed in Level 1 compared with 16-19 percent of the native-born adults.

The report details that Florida residents born in another country had completed fewer years of schooling in this country, on average (11 years), than residents who were born in the United States (12.5 years). Interestingly, however, Florida's foreign-born adults have completed significantly more years of schooling (11 years) than their counterparts in the South (9.4 years) and the nation as a whole (8.7 years). Through its K-12 public schooling, adult education opportunities, and an influx of immigrants with possibly higher literacy skills upon arrival to this state than to others, Florida is working to develop a work force that will be better able to compete in a global economy which is demanding higher literacy skills.

Additionally, the Division of Applied Technology and Adult Education works in cooperation with Adult Migrant Education to reach migrant adults and offer training and educational services. For the past several years the Division has been the recipient of a *National Migrant Adult Education Even Start* grant designed to offer educational services to migrant families through a family literacy framework.

❒ **Adults who are homeless**

The report entitled ***Homeless Conditions in Florida: Fourth Annual Report to the Legislature*** states that in 1992, there was an approximate daily average of 46,000 homeless adults on any given day in Florida. Additionally, the report notes that 70 percent of Florida's homeless reside in the seven largest counties.

Florida received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide literacy and related assistance to homeless adults. Eight Adult Education for the Homeless sub-grants were funded in Escambia, Leon, Duval, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties. During the grant period (May 1, 1994 - April 30, 1995), 5,366 homeless adults were enrolled in Florida's adult education programs.

The achievements and benefits accruing to the participants in the adult education programs for homeless adults went far beyond academic outcomes.

Various estimates purport that up to 75 percent of persons incarcerated in prison lack a high school diploma.

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Achievments of Homeless Adults

Improved skills for personal satisfaction - 2,416
Demonstrated improved reading, writing, & math skills - 3,174
Entered other educational training program(s) - 570
Obtained a job, better job, or higher salary - 560
Registered to vote or voted - 299

—The Florida Adult Homeless Literacy Training and Basic Skills Assistance Projects

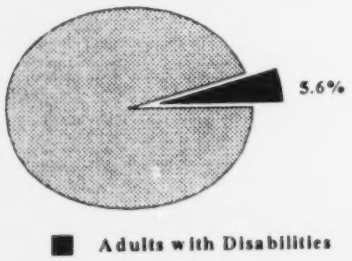
Adults with Disabilities

Research indicates that our learners are diverse. They vary in ages, abilities, work experiences, cultural backgrounds and personal goals.

Adult Education programs provide adults with disabilities the instructional and support services enabling them to fully participate in a positive educational experience. Since the passing of the Zollie M. Maynard, Sr., Education for Handicapped Adults Act, local educational agencies in Florida have had the ability to develop plans for serving adults with disabilities.

For the adult education program, the definition of an adult disabled student is one who has a learning, mental, physical, emotional, sensory, or other disability that requires modifications to the educational program, adaptive equipment, or specialized instructional methods and services. Through this program 26,828 students were served this year.

Adults with Disabilities Served Compared to Total Adult Students Served



—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

Institutionalized Adults

Various estimates purport that up to 75 percent of persons incarcerated in prison lack a high school diploma. ***Literacy Behind Prison Walls***, a special study commissioned by the Educational Testing Service, reports that about seven out of ten prisoners perform in levels 1 and 2 on the prose, document, and quantitative scales. These prisoners are apt to experience difficulty in performing tasks that require them to integrate or synthesize information from complex or lengthy texts, or to perform quantitative tasks that involve two or more sequential operations and that require the individual to set up a problem.

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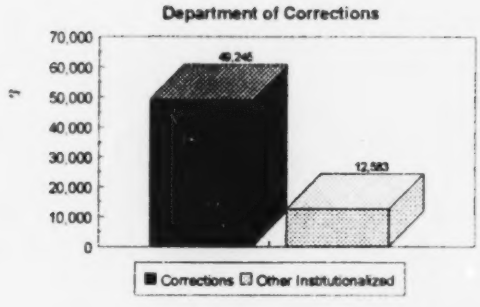


—Adult Education Annual Performance Report

Through the Department of Corrections, 49,245 adults were served this year. Additionally, 12,583 adults, institutionalized in various agencies, participated in adult education programs. These agencies include hospitals, residential treatment facilities, and sheltered workshops.

Characteristics of Adult Students

Adult Education learners have characteristics that do differentiate them from the traditional learner in a K-12 program.

Research indicates that our learners are diverse. They vary in ages, abilities, job experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal goals. They range in educational backgrounds from no formal schooling through many years of schooling. They have well developed personal identities and, of course, great personal experiences, which serve as learning resources.

Adult learners also tend to be very pragmatic learners. They study voluntarily and do so to improve their life in some way. Often, they are learning to improve their performance in social roles, such as parents or workers. Due to their other responsibilities, schoolwork is one of many responsibilities and an ability to stop and start the process is critical to their needs.

Raised self-esteem and improved quality of life are supplementary benefits appreciated by the majority of students.

While they have had many experiences, often those associated with learning and school may make them feel insecure. They may be embarrassed to return to school or they may have negative impressions about school, in general, and/or their abilities.

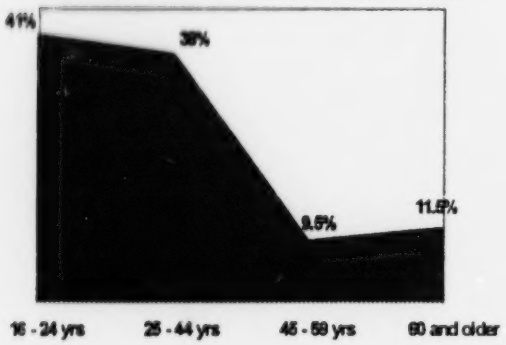
Thus, understanding as much as possible about the adult learners in Florida is critical to the development of programs that lead to success for our students.

Review of the ***Adult Education Program Evaluation*** and the ***Adult Education Annual Report*** shows the following characteristics of Florida students:

Student Characteristics in Florida

- Between 64 and 71 percent of students are unemployed
- Approximately 23 percent are married
- 73 percent of the students are single
- About 29 percent are parents
- Roughly 14 percent receive a welfare check
- 15 percent are in an HRS program
- Students range in age—the majority being under 44 years of age

Percentage of Adult Education Students by Age



—Results of Florida's Fourth-Year Adult Education Program Evaluation

Reasons Students Get Involved in Adult Education Programs

Get a job	53.5%
Improve job skills	43.5%
Retrain for job	23.2%
Earn H.S. diploma or GED	55.5%
Take classes for H.S. credit	23.9%
Improve skills to get into college	39.4%
Enter correctional training program	10.1%
Enter vocational/technical training	28.3%
Get into military	9.8%
Get off welfare	11.7%
Be better at math skills	36.7%
Learn English	45.9%
Improve quality of life	60.3%
Be with a friend	22.7%
Raise self-esteem	61.8%
Read the Bible	19.8%
Read to my children	26.0%
Help my child with homework	27.4%
Learn about citizenship	20.5%

—Adult Education Program Evaluation Report

Personal Goals of Students

The following goal categories and personal goals were chosen by students to describe their reasons for being involved in adult education. (The total does not equal100 percent as students were allowed to check more than one goal that applied.)

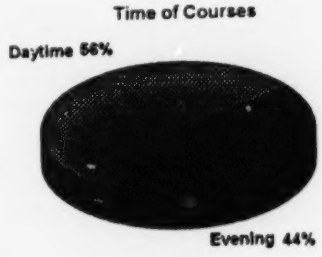
As the above table illustrates, the reasons for participating in adult education are varied, but self-esteem and quality of life experiences are greatly appreciated by the majority of students.

Students in the ***Adult Education Program Evaluation*** study underscored the need for a flexible educational system. About 20.7 percent stated that they had exited and reentered adult education previously, underscoring the other responsibilities and life experiences that impact adults.

In sum, however, students seemed extremely pleased with the adult education delivery system. The ***Adult Education Program Evaluation*** found that out of all students, 69.3 percent believe that adult education classes have satisfied their reasons for attending "very well," 26.2 percent stated "average," and only 0.9 percent stated "not well" (5 percent gave no opinion). In addition, 89.5 percent of all students stated that their teachers were "good," 7.7 percent students felt the teachers were "average," and only .2 percent felt the teachers were "poor" (.5 percent gave no response).

Program Development

Programs developed for adult students are unique in many ways. The classroom may be a church, a school, workplace, or any other convenient site. The curriculum used is designed to assist the student in learning through a variety of contexts. Learning is competency-based. Functional skills curriculum and other learning methods especially developed for the adult learner ensure that the adult education experience is different from the traditional school classroom. Further, 56 percent of the courses were offered during the day and 44 percent through evening courses.



—Adult Performance Report

Consider the following information from ***Florida's Adult Education Annual Performance Report*** which specifically describes the percentage of students served at various program locations. A total of 36,555 classes were offered at these locations.

Program Location	Percent
Elementary/Secondary School	40%
Learning Center	18%
Community College	14%
Correctional Institution	8%
Community-Based Organization	2.4%
Other (Worksite, Library, Home, etc.)	17.6%

Teachers and Administrators

Adult education is dependent on terrific support from teachers and administrators. In Florida, teachers are required to meet the same certification standards as K-12 instructors. Again, adult learners gave high grades to teachers. 89.5 percent of students stated that their teachers were "good" (highest quality indicator available to choose); 7.7 percent indicated "average," and only .2 percent stated "poor" (0.5 percent had no response).

Unlike the K-12 program, there is very little additional support staff. For this reason, volunteers and paraprofessionals play a crucial role. Volunteers most often assist in the classroom by providing one-on-one tutoring, although they assist with monitoring and clerical tasks as well.

Staffing Patterns

	Part-Time	Full-Time	Volunteers
Local Level Administrators	261	499	416
Local Teachers	7774	1121	2293
Local Counselors	291	195	90
Local Paraprofessionals	410	207	1523

Adult education is dependent on terrific support from teachers and administrators.

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Improving the Quality of Service

Critical needs in adult education are particularly related to support systems such as child care and transportation.

The ***Adult Education Program Evaluation*** asks that students, teachers, and administrators rate the quality of services in certain key areas to determine effectiveness and need. In the areas in which schools are doing well, students, administrators, and teachers agreed.

Services receiving marks of highest quality:

Students	Administrators	Teachers
Registration for classes	Registration for classes	Registration for classes
Teacher advising	Teacher advising	Teacher advising
Up-to-date curriculum materials; condition of books	Up-to-date curriculum materials; condition of books	Orientation
Orientation	Orientation	Up-to-date curriculum materials; condition of books
Counselor Advising	Up-to-date use of TVs, VCRs, computers, tape recorders, etc.	Counselor Advising

In the areas that relate to the perception of quality services that were rated lowest, administrators' ratings and students' ratings were quite comparable, while teachers prioritized somewhat differently.

Services in greatest need of improvment:

Students	Adminstrators	Teachers
Transportation	Transportation	Library/ Resource Center
Child Care	Child Care	Child Care
Financial Aid Services	Library/ Resource Center	Services for Disabled Students
Library/ Resource Center	Financial Aid Services	Up-to-date use of TVs,VCRs, computers, tape recorders, etc.
Course Catalog	Services for Disabled Students	Transportation

The above list points out some of the critical needs in adult education—particularly in the area of support systems, such as child care and transportation. These needs are primarily related to the limited funding for adult education. As to financial aid services, this area is related to transitioning adult students into other education opportunities (since adult education courses in Florida are free for those without a high school diploma).

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Conclusion

As this report has indicated, Florida has a dynamic adult education program. We pride ourselves on the conscientious efforts of our administrators and teachers to perform day and night as advocates for adult learning. In 1995, Florida led the nation in a number of adult education services. These include:

- ✔ For state-administered adult education programs, enrollment of participants who are black (not of Hispanic origin)—Florida ranked #1.
- ✔ For state-administered adult education programs, enrollment of participants who are white (not of Hispanic origin)— Florida ranked #1.
- ✔ For number of evening classes offered to adult education students in state-administered adult education programs— Florida ranked #1.
- ✔ For enrollment of participants age 60 years or older in state-administered adult education programs—Florida ranked #1.
- ✔ For number of students served in correctional facilities in state-administered adult education programs—Florida ranked #1.

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